The Buddha's Teaching



In His Own Words

Texts selected, arranged, and translated by

Bhikkhu Ñanamoli

Contents

Publisher's Note
Copyright Note
Abbreviations
Voices

What is the Dhamma?
There is No First Beginning
The Four Noble Truths
I. The Truth of Suffering
II. The Truth of the Origin of Suffering
III. The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
IV. The Truth of the Way
1. Right View
2. Right Intention
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration
The Noble Eightfold Path in Practice
The Means
The End

Publisher's Note

The present Wheel booklet contains Chapter 12 of Bhikkhu Ñanamoli's classic compilation, *The Life of the Buddha according to the Pali Canon*. The purpose of that book, now in print for 27 years, had been to construct a biography of the Buddha by piecing together all the relevant material scattered throughout the Vinaya and the Sutta Pitakas. Since the Buddha's life was in many respects inseparable from his teaching, Ven. Ñanamoli had included, in the middle of the book, an anthology of texts dealing with the teaching, which he entitled "The Doctrine." In his introduction he described his purpose thus:

> In Chapter 12 the main elements of doctrine have been brought together roughly following an order suggested by the Discourses. No interpretation has been attempted, ... but rather the material has been put together in such a way

> as to help the reader make his own. A stereotyped interpretation risks slipping into one of the types of metaphysical wrong view, which the Buddha himself has described in great detail. If Chapter 12 is found rather forbidding, let the last words of Anathapindika be pleaded in justification for its inclusion ...

The "last words of Anathapindika," the Buddha's chief patron, were: "Let such (profound) talks on the Dhamma be given to the laity. There are some with little dust in their eyes who are wasting through not hearing such talks on the Dhamma. Some of them will gain final knowledge of the Dhamma."

Several readers had suggested to the publisher that Chapter 12 of *Life of the Buddha* could well stand on its own as an excellent little handbook of the Buddha's teachings, useful for study, reflection, and meditation. With this aim it is being issued as a separate Wheel booklet. The structure of the anthology is based on the formula of the Four Noble Truths and the eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, which the Buddha announced in his First Sermon at Benares and returned to again and again throughout his ministry. Within this framework Ven. Ñanamoli has incorporated a wide variety of texts which throw new and illuminating spotlights on the subtle implications of these familiar formulas.

We hope this booklet will fulfil the purpose for which it is being published.

Abbreviations

AN	Anguttara Nikaya
DN	Digha Nikaya
Iti	Itivuttaka
Khp	Khuddakapatha
MN	Majjhima Nikaya
Sn	Suttanipata
SN	Samyutta Nikaya
Ud	Udana
Vin	Vinaya

Voices

NARRATOR ONE. A commentator, or compeer, of the present time, who introduces the others, and who represents a dispassionate onlooker with some general knowledge of the events.

NARRATOR TWO. A commentator who supplies historical and traditional information contained only in the medieval Pali commentaries (mainly those of the fifth century by the Elder Buddhaghosa). His functions are to give the minimum of such material needed for historical clarity and, occasionally, to summarize portions of the Canon itself.

FIRST VOICE. The voice of the Elder Ananda, the disciple and personal attendant of the Buddha, who recited the Discourses (or Suttas) at the First Council, held at Rajagaha three months after the Buddha's attainment of final Nibbana.

SECOND VOICE. The voice of the Elder Upali, disciple of the Buddha, who recited the Discipline (or Vinaya) at the First Council.

Back to Contents | *Go to* What is the Dhamma?

Home Page | Site Contents | Introduction to Buddhism Page

Copyright Note:

Copyright © 1999 Buddhist Publication Society. Reproduction without consent of the BPS is prohibited, except for copies made for personal use or to be given to friends.
[Back to Contents]

The Buddha's Teaching

What is the Dhamma?

NARRATOR ONE: What is the "Dhamma" that was "well proclaimed" by the "Supreme Physician"? Is it an attempt to make a complete description of the world? Is it a metaphysical system?

FIRST VOICE:
The Blessed One was once living at Savatthi in Jeta's Grove. A deity called Rohitassa came to him late in the night, paid homage to him and asked: "Lord, the world's end where one neither is born nor ages nor dies nor passes away nor reappears: is it possible to know or see or reach that by travelling there?"

"Friend, that there is a world's end where one neither is born nor ages nor dies nor passes away nor reappears, which is to be known or seen or reached by travelling there -- that I do not say. Yet I do not say that there is ending of suffering without reaching the world's end. Rather it is in this fathom-long carcass with its perceptions and its mind that I describe the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the way leading to the cessation of the world.

"It is utterly impossible
To reach by walking the world's end;
But none escape from suffering
Unless the world's end has been reached.

It is a Sage, a knower of the world,
Who gets to the world's end, and it is he
By whom the holy life has been lived out;
In knowing the world's end he is at peace
And hopes for neither this world nor the next."

SN 2:36; AN 4:46

The Blessed One was once living at Kosambi in a wood of simsapa trees. He picked up a few leaves in his hand, and he asked the bhikkhus: "How do you conceive this, bhikkhus, which is more, the few leaves that I have picked up in my hand or those on the trees in the wood?"

"The leaves that the Blessed One has picked up in his hand are few, Lord; those in the wood are far more."

"So too, bhikkhus, the things that I have known by direct knowledge are more: the things that I have told you are only a few. Why have I not told them? Because they bring no benefit, no advancement in the holy life, and because they do not lead to dispassion, to fading, to ceasing, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana. That is why I have not told them. And what have I told you? 'This is suffering; this is the origin of suffering; this is the cessation of suffering; this is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.' That is what I have told you. Why have I told it? Because it brings benefit, and advancement in the holy life, and because it leads to dispassion, to fading, to ceasing, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana. So, bhikkhus, let your task be this: 'This is suffering, this is the origin of suffering, this the cessation of suffering, this is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.'"

SN 56:31

NARRATOR ONE: It is not, then, an attempt to make some complete description of the world, either internal or external. Is it a metaphysical system -- a consistent logical construction -- and if so, what premise is it based on?

FIRST VOICE:
Once when the Blessed One had gone into Rajagaha for alms the naked ascetic Kassapa went up to him, and after greeting him, he said: "We would ask Master Gotama something, if Master Gotama would consent to give an answer." -- "It is not the time for questions, Kassapa; we are among houses." He asked a second and a third time and received the same reply. Then he said: "It is not much we want to ask, Master Gotama." -- "Ask, then, Kassapa, whatever you like."

"How is it, Master Gotama, is suffering of one's own making?" -- "Do not put it like that, Kassapa." -- "Then is suffering of another's making?" -- "Do not put it like that, Kassapa." -- "Then is suffering both of one's own and another's making?" -- "Do not put it like that, Kassapa." "Then is suffering neither of one's own nor another's making but fortuitous?" -- "Do not put it like that, Kassapa." -- "Then is there no suffering?" -- "It is not a fact that there is no suffering: there is suffering, Kassapa." -- "Then does Master Gotama neither know nor see suffering?" -- "It is not a fact that I neither know nor see suffering: I both know and see suffering, Kassapa."

SN 12:17

Once too the wanderer Uttiya went to the Blessed One, and after greeting him, he sat down at one side. Then he asked: "How is it, Master Gotama, the world is eternal: is only that the truth and everything else wrong?" -- "That is not answered by me, Uttiya." -- "Then the world is not eternal: is only that the truth and everything else wrong?" -- "That too is not answered by me, Uttiya." -- "The world is finite: is only that the truth and everything else wrong?" -- "That too is not answered by me, Uttiya." -- "Then the world is infinite: is only that the truth and everything else wrong?" -- "That too is not answered by me, Uttiya." -- "The soul is the same as the body: is only that the truth and everything else wrong?" -- "That too is not answered by me, Uttiya." -- "Then the soul is one and the body another: is only that the truth and everything else wrong?" -- "That too is not answered by me, Uttiya." -- "After death a Perfect One is: is only that the truth and everything else wrong?" -- "That too is not answered by me, Uttiya." -- "Then after death a Perfect One is not: is only that the truth and everything else wrong?" -- "That too is not answered by me, Uttiya." -- "Then after death a Perfect One both is

and is not: is only that the truth and everything else wrong?" -- "That too is not answered by me, Uttiya." -- "Then after death a Perfect One neither is nor is not: is only that the truth and everything else wrong?" -- "That too is not answered by me, Uttiya."

"But why does Master Gotama decline to answer when I ask him these questions? What then is answered by Master Gotama?"

"I teach the Dhamma to disciples from direct knowledge, Uttiya, for the purification of beings, for surmounting sorrow and lamentation, for ending pain and grief, for attainment of the true goal, for realizing Nibbana."

"Master Gotama, does that Dhamma provide an outlet from suffering for all the world, or for half, or for a third?"

When this was said, the Blessed One remained silent.

Then the Venerable Ananda thought: "The wanderer Uttiya must not conceive any such pernicious view as 'When the monk Gotama is asked a question peculiar to me and to no one else and he founders and does not answer, is it because he is unable?' That would be long for his harm and suffering." So he said to him: "Friend Uttiya, I shall give you a simile; for some wise men here get to know through a simile the meaning of what is said.

"Suppose a king had a city with strong ditches, ramparts and bastions, and a single gate, and he had a wise, clever, sagacious gate-keeper there who stopped those whom he did not know and admitted only those whom he knew; and since he had himself gone round the path encircling the city and had seen no gaps in the ramparts or any hole even big enough for a cat to pass through, he might conclude that living beings above a certain size must go in and out through the gate -- so too, friend Uttiya, a Perfect One's concern is not that 'All the world shall find an outlet by this, or a half, or a third,' but rather that 'Whoever has found or finds or will find an outlet from the world of suffering, that is always done by abandoning the five hindrances (of desire for sensuality, ill will, lethargy-and-drowsiness, agitation-and-worry, and uncertainty), defilements that weaken understanding, and by maintaining in being the seven factors of enlightenment with minds well established on the four foundations of mindfulness.'

"Your question which you put to the Blessed One was framed in the

wrong way; that was why the Blessed One did not answer it."

AN 10:95

On another occasion the wanderer Vacchagotta went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. Then he asked: "How is it, Master Gotama, does self exist?" When this was said, the Blessed One was silent. "How is it, then, Master Gotama, does self not exist?" And for a second time the Blessed One was silent. Then the wanderer Vacchagotta got up from his seat and went away. Not long after he had gone the Venerable Ananda asked the Blessed One: "Lord, how is it that when the Blessed One was questioned he did not answer?"

"If, when I was asked 'Does self exist?' I had answered 'Self exists,' that would have been the belief of those who hold the theory of eternalism. And if, when I was asked 'Does self not exist?' I had answered 'Self does not exist,' that would have been the belief of those who hold the theory of annihilationism. Again, if, when asked 'Does self exist?' I had answered 'Self exists,' would that have been in conformity with my knowledge that all things are not-self? And if, when asked 'Does self not exist?' I had answered 'Self does not exist,' then confused as he already is, Ananda, the wanderer Vacchagotta would have become still more confused, assuming: 'Surely then I had a self before and now have none.'"

SN 44:10

At one time the Blessed One was living at Savatthi, and at that time a number of wandering monks and brahmans of various sects had gone into Savatthi for alms. They had differing views, opinions, and notions, and they relied for support on their differing views. There were some monks and brahmans who asserted and believed that "The world is eternal: only this is true, everything else is wrong," and some who asserted and believed each of the other nine views. They quarreled, brawled, wrangled, and wounded each other with verbal darts: "The Dhamma is like this; the Dhamma is not like this! The Dhamma is not like this; the Dhamma is like this!"

Then a number of bhikkhus, on their return from their alms round,

told the Blessed One about it. The Blessed One said: "Bhikkhus, there was once a certain king in Savatthi. He told a man: 'Come, man, get together all the men in Savatthi who have been born blind.' -- 'Yes, sire,' he replied. And when he had done so, he told the king, who said, 'Then show them an elephant.' He did so, saying, 'You men blind from birth, an elephant is like this,' and he showed the elephant's head to some and its ear to others and its tusk to others and its trunk to others and its body to others and its foot to others and its rump to others and its tail to others and the tuft at the end of its tail to others. Then he went to the king and told him what he had done.

"So the king went to the men blind from birth, and he asked them: 'Has an elephant been shown to you?' -- 'Yes, Sire.' -- 'Then describe what the elephant is like.' Now those who had been shown the head said 'Sire, the elephant is like a jar,' and those shown the ear said 'It is like a winnowing basket,' and those shown the tusk said 'It is like a post,' and those shown the trunk said 'It is like a plough's pole,' and those shown the body said 'It is like a granary,' and those shown the foot said 'It is like the base of a column,' and those shown the rump said 'It is like a mortar,' and those shown the tail said 'It is like a pestle,' and those shown the tuft at the end of the tail said 'It is like a broom.' They fought among themselves with their fists, crying: 'The elephant is like this; it is not like this! The elephant is not like this; it is like this!' But the king was pleased.

"So too the wanderers of other sects are blind and eyeless. That is why they quarrel, brawl, wrangle, and wound each other with verbal darts: 'The Dhamma is like this; the Dhamma is not like this! The Dhamma is not like this; the Dhamma is like this!'"

Ud 6:4

NARRATOR ONE: So it would appear to be a mistake to call the Buddha's teaching either an attempt to describe the world completely or a metaphysical system built up by logic. Is it, then, an ethical commandment, a revealed religion of faith, or simply a stoical code of behaviour? Before an attempt can be made to find answers to those questions, some sort of a survey of the doctrines taught is needed. The material contained in the Discourses seems, in fact, to be rather in the nature of material for a map, for each to make his own map, but all

oriented alike. These oriented descriptions of facets of experience, in fact, enable a person to estimate his position and judge for himself what he had better do.

The Discourses offer not so much a description as a set of overlapping descriptions. Close examination of existence finds always something of the qualities of the mirage and of the paradox behind the appearance. The ends can never be made quite to meet. The innumerable different facets presented in the Suttas with countless repetitions of certain of these facets in varying combinations and contexts remind one of a collection of air photographs from which maps are to be made. The facets in the Discourses are all oriented to cessation of suffering, the four points of their compass being the Four Noble Truths. Let us try to make a specimen map out of some of this material. In this case, since a start has to be made somewhere, we can start for our baseline with birth, which, like death, is to the ordinary man an everyday fact and at the same time an insoluble mystery.

Next >>>

The Buddha's Teaching

There is No First Beginning

NARRATOR TWO: Is consciousness conceivable without a past? Can it be said to have a beginning?

FIRST VOICE:
"Bhikkhus, the round is beginningless. Of the beings that travel and trudge through this round, shut in as they are by ignorance and fettered by craving, no first beginning is describable."

SN 15:1

"That both I and you have to travel and trudge through this long round is owing to our not discovering, not penetrating, four truths. What four? They are: (I) the noble truth of suffering, (II) the noble truth of the origin of suffering, (III) the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, and (IV) the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering."

DN 16

The Four Noble Truths

NARRATOR TWO: Now here is a description of the Four Noble Truths.

FIRST VOICE:

I

"What is the noble truth of suffering? Birth is suffering, ageing is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering; sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are suffering; association with the loathed is suffering, dissociation from the loved is suffering, not to get what one wants is suffering; in short, the five aggregates affected by clinging are suffering."[1]

SN 56:11

II

"What is the noble truth of the origin of suffering? It is craving, which renews being, and is accompanied by relish and lust, relishing this and that: in other words, craving for sensual desires, craving for being, craving for non-being. But whereon does this craving arise and flourish? Wherever there is that which seems lovable and gratifying, thereon it arises and flourishes."

DN 22

"It is with ignorance as condition that formations come to be; with formations as condition, consciousness; with consciousness as condition, name-and-form; with name-and-form as condition, the sixfold base for contact; with the sixfold base as condition, contact; with contact as condition, feeling; with feeling as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging; with clinging as condition, being; with being as condition, birth; with birth as condition, ageing and death come to be, and also sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief, and despair; that is how there is an origin to this whole aggregate mass of suffering. This is called the noble truth of the origin of suffering."

AN 3:61

III

"What is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering? It is the

remainderless fading and cessation of that same craving, the rejecting, relinquishing, leaving and renouncing of it. But whereon is this craving abandoned and made to cease? Wherever there is that which seems lovable and gratifying, thereon it is abandoned and made to cease."

DN 22

"With the remainderless fading and cessation of ignorance there is cessation of formations; with cessation of formations, cessation of consciousness... with cessation of birth, ageing and death cease, and also sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair; that is how there is a cessation to this whole aggregate mass of suffering. This is called the noble truth of the cessation of suffering."

AN 3:61

IV

"What is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering? It is this Noble Eightfold Path, that is to say: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration."

DN 22

"Of these Four Noble Truths, the noble truth of suffering must be penetrated to by full knowledge of suffering; the noble truth of the origin of suffering must be penetrated to by abandoning craving; the noble truth of the cessation of suffering must be penetrated to by realizing cessation of craving; the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering must be penetrated to by maintaining in being the Noble Eightfold Path."

SN 56:11 and 29 (adapted)

> "These Four Noble Truths (Actualities) are real, not unreal, not other than they seem."
>
> SN 56:27

NARRATOR ONE: The Four Noble Truths are each analysed and defined in detail.

Next >>>

Back to Contents | *Back to* Previous Page | *Go to* The Truth of Suffering

Home Page | Site Contents | Introduction to Buddhism Page

Footnote:

1. The "five aggregates affected by clinging" (*pañc'upadanakkhandha*) are best regarded as five convenient "classes" or categories under which any arisen component of experience (in its widest sense) can be grouped for analysis and discussion; they have no existence of their own separate from the components that represent them. Their representatives do not occur separately. Also they are structurally interdependent, rather as a glass tumbler implies at once the feature of *material* (glass), *affective* (attractiveness, or the reverse or indifference), *individual characteristics* (shape, colour, etc.), *determined (formed) utility* (all these constituting the "name-and-form"), and *consciousness of all this*, which it is not. [Back to text]

The Buddha's Teaching

I. The Truth of Suffering

NARRATOR TWO: It was said that the truth of suffering was "in short, the five aggregates affected by clinging." Here are definitions of them.

FIRST VOICE:
"What are the five aggregates affected by clinging? They are the (material) form aggregate affected by clinging, the feeling aggregate affected by clinging, the perception aggregate affected by clinging, the formations aggregate affected by clinging, and the consciousness aggregate affected by clinging."

DN 22

"Why does one say 'form'? It is deformed (*ruppati*), that is why it is called 'form' (*rupa*). Deformed by what? By cold and heat and hunger and thirst, by contact with gadflies, gnats, wind, sunburn and creeping things."

SN 22:79

"What is form? The four great entities and any form derived upon them by clinging are called form."

SN 22:56

"Whatever in oneself, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and

clung to (organic), such as head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin; flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys; heart, liver, midriff, spleen, lights; bowels, entrails, gorge, dung, or whatever else in oneself, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and clung to: that is called earth element[2] in oneself. Now earth element in oneself and external earth element are only earth element.

"Whatever in oneself ... is water, watery, and clung to, such as bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat; tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, urine, or whatever else in oneself ... is water, watery, and clung to: that is called water element in oneself. Now water element in oneself and external water element are only water element.

"Whatever in oneself ... is fire, fiery, and clung to, such as that whereby one is warmed, ages, and is consumed, and whereby what is eaten, drunk, chewed and tasted gets digested and assimilated, or whatever else in oneself... is fire, fiery, and clung to: that is called fire element in oneself. Now fire element in oneself and external fire element are only fire element.

"Whatever in oneself ... is air, airy, and clung to, such as upgoing winds (forces), down-going winds (forces), winds (forces) in the belly and in the bowels, winds (forces) that pervade all the limbs, in-breath and out-breath, or whatever else in oneself ... is air, airy, and clung to: that is called air element in oneself. Now air element in oneself and external air element are only air element.

"Also whatever in oneself ... is space, spatial, and clung to, such as ear-hole, nose-hole, mouth-door, and that (aperture) whereby what is eaten, drunk, chewed, and tasted is swallowed, and that wherein it is contained, and that whereby it passes out below, or whatever else in oneself ... is space, spatial, and clung to: that is called space element. Now space element in oneself and external space element are only space element ... And space element has nowhere any standing of its own."

MN 62

"Any form whatever, whether past, future, or present, in oneself or external, coarse or fine, inferior or superior, far or near, that is affected by taints and provocative of clinging: that is called the form

aggregate affected by clinging."

SN 22:48

"Why does one say 'feeling'? It is felt, that is why it is called feeling. Felt as what? Felt as pleasure, as pain, or as neither-pain-nor-pleasure."

SN 22:79; cf. MN 43

"Whatever is felt bodily or mentally as pleasant and gratifying is pleasant feeling. Whatever is felt bodily or mentally as painful and hurting is painful feeling. Whatever is felt bodily or mentally as neither gratifying nor hurting is neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.... Pleasant feeling is pleasant in virtue of presence and painful in virtue of change. Painful feeling is painful in virtue of presence and pleasant in virtue of change. Neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling is pleasant in virtue of knowledge and painful in virtue of want of knowledge."

MN 44

"There are these six bodies of (such) feeling: feeling born of eye-contact, of ear-contact, of nose-contact, of tongue-contact, of body-contact, and of mind-contact."

SN 22:56

"Any feeling whatever... that is affected by taints and provocative of clinging: that is called the feeling aggregate affected by clinging."

SN 22:48

"Why does one say 'perception'? It perceives, that is why it is called

perception. Perceives what? It perceives, for example, blue and yellow and red and white."

SN 22:79

"There are these six bodies of perception: perception of (visible) forms, of sounds, of odours, of flavours, of tangibles, and of ideas."

SN 22:56

"Any perception whatever... that is affected by taints and provocative of clinging: that is called the perception aggregate affected by clinging."

SN 22:48

"Why does one say 'formations'? They form the formed, that is why they are called formations. What is the formed that they form? (Material) form as the state (essence) of form is the formed (compounded) that they form (compound); feeling as the state of feeling is the formed that they form; perception as the state of perception is the formed that they form; formations as the state of formations is the formed that they form; consciousness as the state of consciousness is the formed that they form."[3]

SN 22:79

"Three kinds of formations: formation of merit (as action which ripens in pleasure), formation of demerit (as action which ripens in pain), and formation of imperturbability (as action, namely, meditation, which ripens in the formless state, which for as long as they last are unperturbed by perception of form, resistance, or difference)."

DN 33

"Three formations: in-breaths and out-breaths belong to a body, these are things bound up with a body, that is why they are a bodily formation. Having previously thought and explored, one breaks into speech, that is why thinking and exploring are a verbal formation. Perception and feeling belong to consciousness, these are things bound up with consciousness, that is why they are a mental formation."

MN 44; cf. MN 9

"What are formations? There are six bodies of choice[4]: choice among visible forms, sounds, odours, flavours, tangibles, and mental objects."

SN 22:56

"Choice I call action."

AN 6:63

"Any formations whatever ... that are affected by taints and provocative of clinging: these are called the formations aggregate affected by clinging."

SN 22:48

"Why does one say 'consciousness'? It cognizes, that is why it is called consciousness. Cognizes what? It cognizes, for example, the sour, bitter, pungent, sweet, alkaline, unalkaline, salty, and unsalty."

SN 22:79

"What does that consciousness cognize? It cognizes, for example, that there is pleasure, that there is pain, that there is neither-pain-nor-pleasure."

MN 43, 140

"There are these six bodies of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind-consciousness."

SN 22:56

"Consciousness is called after the conditions due to which it arises. When consciousness arises due to eye and forms, it is called eye-consciousness; due to ear and sounds, ear-consciousness; ... due to mind and ideas, mind-consciousness."

MN 38

"Feeling, perception and consciousness are conjoined, not disjoined, and it is impossible to separate each from each in order to describe their different potentialities; for what one feels, that one perceives, and what one perceives, that one cognizes. By bare mind-consciousness disjoined from the five sense-faculties the (external) base consisting of infiniteness of space can be known thus 'infinite space'; the (external) base consisting of infiniteness of consciousness can be known thus 'infinite consciousness'; and the (external) base consisting of nothingness can be known thus 'there is nothing at all.' A knowable idea is understood by the eye of understanding."

MN 43

"Consciousness depends for its being upon a duality (the duality of the

in-oneself and the external bases for contact)."

SN 35:93

"Any consciousness whatever, whether past, future or present, in oneself or external, coarse or fine, inferior or superior, far or near, that is affected by taints and provocative of clinging: that is called the consciousness aggregate affected by clinging."

SN 22:48

"These five aggregates affected by clinging have desire for their root ... The four great entities (of earth, water, fire, and air) are the cause and condition for describing the form aggregate. Contact is the cause and condition for describing the aggregates of feeling, perception, and formations. Name-and-form is the cause and condition for describing the consciousness aggregate."

MN 109

"Whatever monks or brahmans recollect their past life in its various modes, they all recollect the five aggregates affected by clinging or one or another of them."

SN 22:79

Next >>>

Back to Contents | *Back to* Previous Page | *Go to* The Truth of the Origin of Suffering

Home Page | Site Contents | Introduction to Buddhism Page

Footnotes:

2. "Earth" represents solidity, "water" cohesion, "fire" both temperature and ripening, "air" both extension (distension) and motion. [Back to text]

3. "Whatever has the characteristic of forming should be understood, all taken together, as the formations aggregate ... (It) has the characteristic of agglomerating ... (and) its function is to accumulate." *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, tr. by Ñanamoli, XIV, 131. [Back to text]

4. Other renderings of *cetana* (here "choice") are "volition" and "intention." [Back to text]

The Buddha's Teaching

II. The Truth of the Origin of Suffering

NARRATOR TWO: Here are detailed definitions of the second noble truth.

FIRST VOICE:
"These five aggregates affected by clinging have desire for their root ... The clinging is neither the same as the five aggregates affected by clinging, nor is it something apart from them. It is the desire and lust comprised in them that is the clinging there."

MN 109

"That comes to be when there is this; that arises with the arising of this."[5]

MN 38

"(In the statement of dependent arising:)[6] What is *ageing*? In the various orders of beings, it is any being's ageing, old age, brokenness of teeth, greyness of hair and wrinkledness, decline of life and weakening of sense-faculties. What is *death*? In the various orders of beings, it is any being's passing, passing away, dissolution, disappearance, dying, completion of time, dissolution of aggregates, laying down of the carcass. What is *birth*? In the various orders of beings, it is any being's birth, coming to birth, precipitation in a womb, generation, manifestation of aggregates, acquisition of bases for contact. What is *being*? Three kinds of being are: being in the mode of sensual desire, being in the mode of form, being in the mode of the formless. What is *clinging*? There are four varieties of clinging:

clinging as the habit of sensual desire, clinging as the habit of wrong view, clinging as the habit of (misapprehension of) virtue and duty,[7] and clinging as the habit of self-theories. What is *craving*? There are six bodies of craving: craving for visible forms, sounds, odours, flavours, tangibles, and ideas. What is *feeling*? There are six bodies of (the three sorts of) feeling: feeling born of eye-contact, of ear-contact, of nose-contact, of tongue-contact, of body-contact, and of mind-contact. What is *contact*?[8] There are six bodies of contact: eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, mind-contact. What is the *sixfold base*? It is the eye-base, ear-base, nose-base, tongue-base, body-base, and mind-base. What is *name-and-form*?[9] What is called *name* comprises feeling, perception, choice,[10] contact, and attention; what is called *form* comprises the four great entities and any forms derived upon them by clinging; so this name and this form are what is called name-and-form. What is *consciousness*? There are six bodies of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, and mind-consciousness. What are *formations*? Three formations are: the bodily formation, verbal formation, and mental formation. What is *ignorance*? It is nescience about suffering, about the origin of suffering, about the cessation of suffering, and about the way leading to the cessation of suffering."

SN 12:2

"Dependent on eye and visible forms, eye-consciousness arises; the coincidence of the three is contact; with contact as condition, feeling; with feeling as condition, craving; that is how there is an origin to suffering (and so with ear ... mind)."

SN 12:43

"Inflamed by lust, incensed by hate, confused by delusion, overwhelmed by them and his mind obsessed, a man chooses for his own affliction, for others' affliction, and for the affliction of both, and experiences pain and grief."

AN 3:55

"Beings are owners of actions, heirs of actions, they have actions as their progenitor, actions as their kin (and responsibility), actions as their home-refuge; it is actions that differentiate beings into the inferior and superior."

MN 135

"What is old action? Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, are old action (already) determined and chosen that must be experienced to be seen. What is new action? It is whatever action one does now, whether by body, speech, or mind."

SN 35:145

"This body is not yours or another's, but is past action (already) determined and chosen that must be experienced to be seen."

SN 12:37

"It is choice that I call action; it is in choosing that a man acts by body, speech, and mind. There are actions whose ripening will be experienced in hell, in the animal womb, in the realm of ghosts, among human beings, and in heavenly worlds. Actions ripen in three ways: they can ripen here and now, on reappearance, or in some life-process beyond that."

AN 6:63

"Actions done out of lust or hate or delusion ripen wherever an individual selfhood is generated, and wherever those actions ripen, there their ripening is experienced, whether here and now or on next reappearance or in some life-process beyond that."

AN 3:33

"There are four incalculables, which cannot be calculated, an attempt to calculate which would lead to frustration and madness. What four? They are the objective field of the Buddhas, the objective field of one who has acquired the meditations, the ripening of action, and the calculation of the world."

AN 4:77

"The world is led by mind."

SN 1:72

Next >>>

Back to Contents | *Back to* Previous Page | *Go to* The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering

Home Page | Site Contents | Introduction to Buddhism Page

Footnotes:

5. This is in the sense of necessary condition. [Back to text]

6. On dependent arising see *The Path of Purification*, Ch. XVII. [Back to text]

7. *Silabbat'upadana* -- clinging to rites and rituals. [Back to text]

8. "Contact" is the contact between the "in-oneself" and the "external" (e.g. eyesight-cum-seen), which is only made possible by the presence of consciousness (e.g. eye-consciousness). It is thus a basic factor in the essential complexity of anything arisen, perceived and formed, whether five-sensory or idea or both. [Back to text]

9. "Name-and-form" is the perceiving and the percept together, experienced and recognized ("named"). It is the "imagery-cum-matter," which together make the individualized and determined subjective perception of an object; but it does not, in the Suttas, include the consciousness in virtue of which that is possible. Later literature include the consciousness within "name," thus favouring an underivable "mind-matter" opposition. [Back to text]

10. Other renderings of *cetana* (here "choice") are "volition" and "intention." [Back to text]

The Buddha's Teaching

III. The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering

NARRATOR TWO: Here are detailed definitions of the third truth.

FIRST VOICE:
"That does not come to be when there is not this; that ceases with the cessation of this."

MN 38

"Dependent on eye and visible forms, eye-consciousness arises; the coincidence of the three is contact; with contact as condition, there arises what is felt as pleasant or as painful or as neither-painful-nor-pleasant. If, on experiencing the contact of pleasant feeling, one does not relish it or welcome it or accept it, and if no underlying tendency in one to lust for it any longer underlies it -- if, on experiencing the contact of painful feeling, one does not sorrow or lament or beat one's breast, weep and become distraught, and if no underlying tendency in one to resistance to it any longer underlies it -- if, on experiencing the contact of neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, one understands, as it actually is, the arising, disappearance, gratification, dangerous inadequacy, and escape, in the case of that feeling, and if no underlying tendency in one to ignorance any longer underlies it -- then, indeed, that one shall make an end of suffering by abandoning the underlying tendency to lust for pleasant feeling, by eliminating the underlying tendency to resist painful feeling, and by abolishing the underlying tendency to ignore neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling: that is possible."

MN 148

"When lust, hate, and delusion are abandoned, a man does not choose for his own affliction or for others' affliction or for the affliction of both. In that way there comes to be Nibbana here and now, without delay, inviting inspection, onward-leading, and experienceable by the wise."

AN 3:55

"Actions done out of non-lust, non-hate, and non-delusion, done when lust, hate, and delusion have disappeared, are abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, done away with, and are no more subject to future arising."

AN 3:33

"Formless states are more peaceful than states of form; cessation is more peaceful than formless states."[11]

Iti 73

"There is that (external) base where no earth (is), or water or fire or air or base consisting of infinity of space or base consisting of infinity of consciousness or base consisting of nothingness or base consisting of neither-perception-nor-non-perception or this world or the other world or moon or sun; and that I call neither a coming nor a going nor a staying nor a dying nor a reappearance; it has no basis, no evolution, no support; it is the end of suffering.

> "The Unaffected is hard to see;
> It is not easy to see Truth.
> To know is to uncover craving;
> To see is to have done with owning.

"There is an unborn, an un-brought-to-being, an unmade, an

unformed. If there were not, there would be no escape described here for one who is born, brought to being, made, formed. But since there is an unborn, an un-brought-to-being, an unmade, an unformed, an escape is therefore described here for one who is born, brought to being, made, formed."

Ud 8:1-3

"There are two elements of Nibbana. What two? There is the element of Nibbana with result of past clinging still left, and the element of Nibbana without result of past clinging left. What is the element of Nibbana with result of past clinging still left? Here a bhikkhu is an arahant with taints exhausted, who has lived out the life, done what was to be done, laid down the burden, reached the highest goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and who is completely liberated through final knowledge. His five sense faculties remain, owing to the presence of which he still encounters the agreeable and disagreeable, still experiences the pleasant and painful. It is the exhaustion of lust, of hate, and of delusion in him that is called the element of Nibbana with result of past clinging still left. And what is the element of Nibbana without result of past clinging left? Here a bhikkhu is an arahant who has lived out the life ... and is completely liberated through final knowledge. All in him that is felt will, since he does not relish it, become cool here in this very life: this is called the element of Nibbana without result of past clinging left."

Iti 44

"That which is the exhaustion of lust, of hate, and of delusion, is called Nibbana."

SN 38:1

"Just as a flame blown by the wind's force,
Upasiva," said the Blessed One,
"Goes out, and designation applies to it no more,
So too the Silent Sage,

Being freed from the name-body,
Goes out, and designation applies to him no more."

"Then when he has thus gone out,
Does he exist no more?
Or is he made immortal for eternity?
So may it please the Sage to make this plain to me,
Because it is a state that he has understood."

"There is no measuring of one who has gone out,
Upasiva," said the Blessed One,
"And nothing of him
Whereby one could say aught of him;
For when all ideas have been abolished,
All ways of saying, too, have been abolished."

Sn 5:7

Next >>>

Back to Contents | *Back to* Previous Page | *Go to* The Truth of the Way

Home Page | Site Contents | Introduction to Buddhism Page

Footnote:

11. It is necessary to avoid confusing the "formless" (*arupa*), which is a variety of being (*bhava*), with the "unformed" (or "unconditioned," (*asankhata*), which is what has no formation (or condition, *sankhara*). The latter is a term for Nibbana. The "formless" is always conditioned. [Back to text]

The Buddha's Teaching

IV. The Truth of the Way

NARRATOR TWO: The fourth noble truth is the Noble Eightfold Path. Each of its eight components needs a separate definition.

1. Right View

FIRST VOICE:
"Just as the dawn heralds and foretells the rising of the sun, so right view heralds and foretells the penetration to the Four Noble Truths according as they really are."

SN 56:37

NARRATOR TWO: Right view has many facets. Let us take them one by one, beginning with "ripening of action," which, in certain forms and with some reservations, is also shared by other teachings.

FIRST VOICE:
"Right view comes first.[12] How? One understands wrong view as wrong view, and one understands right view as right view. What is wrong view? The view that there is nothing given, offered or sacrificed,[13] no fruit or ripening of good and bad actions, no this world, no other world, no mother, no father, no apparitional beings, no good and virtuous monks and brahmans who have themselves realized by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world: this is wrong view.

"What is right view? There are two kinds of right view: there is that affected by taints, which brings merit and ripens in the essentials of existence; and there is the noble ones' right view without taints, which is supramundane and a factor of the path.

"What is right view affected by taints? The view that there is what is given, offered and sacrificed, and that there is fruit and ripening of good and bad actions, and there is this world and the other world and mother and father and apparitional beings and good and virtuous monks and brahmans who have themselves realized by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world: this is right view affected by taints which brings merit and ripens in the essentials of existence.

"And what is the noble ones' right view? Any understanding, understanding faculty, understanding power, investigation-of-states enlightenment factor, right view as path factor, in one whose mind is ennobled and taintless, who possesses the path, and who maintains it in being: this is the noble ones' right view without taints, which is supramundane and a factor of the path."

MN 117

NARRATOR TWO: Again, it is right view of dependent arising -- the basic structure of the "teaching peculiar to Buddhas" and the first of the new discoveries made by the Buddha. Nothing can arise alone, without the support of other things on which its existence depends.

SECOND VOICE:

"The Perfect One has told the cause
Of causally arisen things;
And what brings their cessation too:
Such is the doctrine preached by the Great Monk."

"The spotless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in him: All that is subject to arising is subject to cessation."

Vin Mahavagga 1:23

FIRST VOICE:

"That comes to be when there is this; that arises with the arising of this. That does not come to be when there is not this; that ceases with the cessation of this."

MN 38

"He who sees dependent arising sees the Dhamma; he who sees the Dhamma sees dependent arising."

MN 28

"Whether Perfect Ones appear or not, there remains this element, this structure of things (phenomena), this certainty in things, namely: specific conditionality. A Perfect One discovers it."

SN 12:20

"If there were no birth altogether in any way of anything anywhere ... there being no birth, with the cessation of birth, could ageing and death be described?" -- "No, Lord." -- "Consequently this is a reason, a source, an origin, a condition, for ageing and death." (And so on

with the other pairs in the formula of dependent arising.)

DN 15

"Lord, 'right view, right view' is said. What does 'right view' refer to?" -- "Usually, Kaccayana, this world depends upon the dualism of existence and non-existence. But when one sees the world's origin as it actually is with right understanding, there is for him none of (what is called) non-existence in the world; and when he sees the world's cessation as it actually is with right understanding, there is for him none of (what is called) existence in the world.

"Usually the world is shackled by bias, clinging, and insistence; but one such as this (who has right view), instead of allowing bias, instead of clinging, and instead of deciding about 'my self,' with such bias, such clinging, and such mental decision in the guise of underlying tendency to insist, he has no doubt or uncertainty that what arises is only arising suffering, and what ceases is only ceasing suffering, and in this his knowledge is independent of others. That is what 'right view' refers to. '(An) all exists' is one extreme; '(an) all does not exist' is the other extreme. Instead of resorting to either extreme, a Perfect One expounds the Dhamma by the middle way: 'It is with ignorance as condition that formations come to be; with formations as condition, consciousness; with consciousness ...' (And so on with both arising and cessation.)"

SN 12:15

"If one asserts: 'He who makes (suffering) feels (it): being one existent from the beginning, his suffering is of his own making,' then one arrives at eternalism. But if one asserts: 'One makes (suffering), another feels (it): being one existent crushed out by feeling, his suffering is of another's making,' then one arrives at annihilationism. Instead of resorting to either of these extremes, a Perfect One expounds the Dhamma by the middle way: ... (that is, by dependent arising and cessation)."

SN 12:17

"All beings are maintained by nutriment."

DN 33; AN 10:27, 28; Khp 2

"What is nutriment? There are these four kinds of nutriment for the maintenance of beings that already are, and for the assistance of those seeking renewal of being: they are physical food as nutriment, gross or subtle, contact as the second, choice as the third, and consciousness as the fourth."

SN 12:63; MN 38

NARRATOR TWO: The very essence of right view is, however, understanding of the Four Noble Truths, which embrace dependent arising and constitute the "teaching peculiar to Buddhas." They formed the subject of the First Sermon.

FIRST VOICE:
"What is right view? It is knowledge of suffering, of the origin of suffering, of the cessation of suffering, and of the way leading to the cessation of suffering: this is called right view."

SN 45:8; DN 22

(I) "'Four venomous snakes' is a name for the four great entities (of earth, water, fire, and air)."

SN 35:197

"Form is like a lump of froth,

Feelings like a water bubble,
Perception too is like a mirage,
Formations like a plantain trunk.[14]
And consciousness, the Sun's Kinsman shows,
Seems nothing but a conjuring trick."

SN 22:95

"The six bases in oneself can be termed an empty village; for whether a wise man investigates them as to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind, they appear alike hollow, empty, and void. The six external bases can be termed village-raiding robbers; for the eye is harassed among agreeable and disagreeable forms, the ear among such sounds, the nose among such odours, the tongue among such flavours, the body among such tangibles, and the mind among such mental objects."

SN 35:197

(II) "In the world. I see this generation
Racked by craving for being,
Wretched men gibbering in the face of Death,
Still craving, hoping for some kind of being.
See how they tremble
Over what they claim as 'mine,'
Like fishes in the puddles of a failing stream."

Sn 4:2

(III) "This is (the most) peaceful, this is (the goal) superior (to all), that is to say, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all essentials of existence, the exhaustion of craving, cessation, Nibbana."

AN 10:60

(IV) "The greatest of (worldly) gains is health;
Nibbana is the greatest bliss;
The eightfold path is the best of paths,
To lead in safety to the Deathless."

MN 75

NARRATOR TWO: Again it is right view of the three general characteristics of impermanence, suffering (or insecurity), and not-self, which express comprehensively what dependent arising expresses structurally. They were the subject of the Second Sermon.

FIRST VOICE:
"There are three formed characteristics of what is formed:[15] arising is evident, fall is evident, and alteration of what is present is evident. There are three unformed characteristics of what is unformed: no arising is evident, no fall is evident, and no alteration of what is present is evident."

AN 3:47

"When one understands how form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness (and how the eye, etc.) are impermanent, one therein possesses right view."

SN 22:51; 35:155

"All is impermanent. And what is the all that is impermanent? The eye is impermanent, forms are impermanent, eye-consciousness ... eye-contact, whatever is felt as pleasant, painful, or neither-painful-nor-pleasant born of eye-contact is impermanent. The ear, etc. ... The nose, etc. ...The tongue, etc. ... The body, etc. ... The mind is impermanent, mental objects ... mind-consciousness ... mind-contact ... whatever is felt ... born of mind-contact is impermanent."

SN 35:43

"What is impermanent is suffering, what is suffering is not-self."

SN 35:1; 22:46

"Whether Perfect Ones appear or not, there remains this element, this structure of things (phenomena), this certainty in things: All formations are impermanent; all formations are suffering; all things are not-self."

AN 3:134

"Bhikkhus, I do not dispute with the world: the world disputes with me. One who proclaims the Dhamma disputes with no one in the world. What wise men in the world say there is not, that I too say there is not; and what wise men in the world say there is, that I too say there is. Wise men in the world say there is no permanent, everlasting, eternal form which is not subject to change, and I too say that there is none. (And so too of the other four aggregates.) Wise men in the world say that there is impermanent form, which is suffering and subject to change, and I too say that there is. (And so with the other four aggregates.)"

SN 22:94

"This body is impermanent, it is formed and dependently arisen."

SN 36:7

"It would be better for an untaught ordinary man to treat as self this body, which is constructed upon the four great entities, than mentality.

[16] Why? Because this body can last one year, two years ... a hundred years; but what is called 'mentality' and 'mind' and 'consciousness' arises and ceases differently through night and day, just as a monkey ranging through a forest seizes a branch, and, letting that go, seizes another."

SN 12:61

"Fruitful as the act of giving is ... yet it is still more fruitful to go with confident heart for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha and undertake the five precepts of virtue ... Fruitful as that is ... yet it is still more fruitful to maintain loving-kindness in being for only as long as the milking of a cow ... fruitful as that is ... yet it is still more fruitful to maintain perception of impermanence in being only for as long as the snapping of a finger."

AN 9:20 (condensed)

"Whosoever relishes the eye, etc., relishes suffering, and he will not be freed from suffering, I say."

SN 35:19

"What is the ripening of suffering? When someone is overcome, and his mind is obsessed by suffering, either he sorrows and laments, and beating his breast, he weeps and becomes distraught, or else he undertakes a search externally: 'Who is there that knows one word, two words, for the cessation of suffering?' I say that suffering either ripens in confusion or in search."

AN 6:63

"That anyone should see formations as pleasure ... or Nibbana as suffering, and have a liking that is in conformity (with truth) is not

possible. (But the opposite) is possible."

AN 6:99

"All form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness, of whatever kind, whether past, future, or present, in oneself or external, coarse or fine, inferior or superior, far or near, should be regarded as it actually is thus: 'This is not mine, this is not what I am, this is not my self.'"

SN 22:59

"That in the world by which one perceives the world and conceives conceits about the world is called 'the world' in the Noble One's Discipline. And what is it in the world with which one does that? It is with the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind."

SN 35:116

"It is being worn away (*lujjati*), that is why it is called 'the world' (*loka*)."

SN 35:82

"'Void world, void world' is said, Lord; in what way is 'void world' said?" -- "It is because of what is void of self and self's property that 'void world' is said, Ananda. And what is void of self and self's property? The eye ... forms ... eye-consciousness ... eye-contact ... any feeling ... born of eye-contact ... The ear, etc. ... The nose, etc. ... The tongue, etc. ... The body, etc. ... The mind, etc. ... any feeling whether pleasant, painful, or neither-painful-nor-pleasant born of mind-contact is void of self and self's property."

SN 35:85

"When a bhikkhu abides much with his mind fortified by perception of impermanence, his mind retreats, retracts, and recoils from gain, honour, and renown instead of reaching out to it, just as a cock's feather or a shred of sinew thrown on a fire retreats, retracts, and recoils from it instead of reaching out to it ... When he abides much with his mind fortified by perception of suffering in impermanence, there is established in him vivid perception of fear, of laxity, indolence, idleness, negligence, and failure in devotion and reviewing, as of a murderer with poised weapon ... when he abides much with his mind fortified by perception of not-self in suffering, his mind is rid of the conceits that treat in terms of 'I' and 'mine' this body with its consciousness and all external signs."

AN 7:46

NARRATOR TWO: The rationalized "self-theory," which is called, in whatever form it may take, "both a view and a fetter," is based upon a subtle fundamental distortion in the act of perceiving, the "conceit 'I am,'" which is "a fetter, but not a view." Now self-theories may or may not be actually formulated; but if they are, they cannot be described specifically without reference to the five aggregates. For that reason they can, when described, all be reduced to one of the types of what is called the "embodiment view,"[17] which is set out schematically. These· are all given up by the stream-enterer, though the conceit "I am" is not.

FIRST VOICE:
"How does there come to be the embodiment view?" -- "Here the untaught ordinary man who has no regard for noble ones and is unconversant with their Dhamma and Discipline ... sees form as self, or self as possessed of form, or form as in self, or self as in form. (And so with each of the other four aggregates: feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness.) A well-taught noble disciple does not do this."

MN 44; MN 109

"The untaught ordinary man who has no regard for noble ones ... gives unreasoned (uncritical) attention in this way: 'Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?' Or else he wonders about himself now in the presently arisen period in this way: 'Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Whence has this being come? Whither is it bound?'

"When he gives unreasoned attention in this way, then one of six types of view arises him as true and established: 'My self exists' or 'My self does not exist' or 'I perceive self with self' or 'I perceive not-self with self' or 'I perceive self with not-self' or some such view as 'This is my self that speaks and feels and experiences here or there the ripening of good and bad actions; but this my self is permanent, everlasting, not subject to change, and will endure as long as eternity.' This field of views is called the thicket of views, the wilderness of views, the contortion of views, the vacillation of views, the fetter of views. The untaught ordinary man bound by the fetter of views is not freed from birth, ageing and death, sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief, and despair: he is not freed from suffering, I say."

MN 2

"Bhikkhus, there are two kinds of (wrong) view, and when deities and human beings are in their grip, some hang back and some overreach; it is only those with vision that see.

"How do some hang back? Deities and human beings love being, delight in being, enjoy being; when the Dhamma is expounded to them for the ending of being, their hearts do not go out to it or acquire confidence, steadiness, and decision. So some hang back.

"And how do some overreach? Some are ashamed, humiliated, and disgusted by that same being, and they look forward to non-being in this way: 'Sirs, when with the dissolution of the body this self is cut off, annihilated, and accordingly after death no longer is, that is the most peaceful, that is the goal superior to all, that is reality.' So some

overreach.

"And how do those with vision see? Here a bhikkhu sees whatever has come to being as come to being. By seeing it thus he has entered upon the way to dispassion for it, to the fading and ceasing of lust for it. That is how one with vision sees."

Iti 49

"Bhikkhus, the possession that one might possess that were permanent, everlasting ... do you see any such possession?" -- "No, Lord." -- "... The self-theory clinging whereby one might cling that would never arouse sorrow and ... despair in him who clung thereby; do you see any such self-theory clinging?" -- "No, Lord." -- "... The view as support that one might take as support that would never arouse sorrow and ... despair in him who took it as support; do you see any such view as support?" -- "No, Lord." -- "... Bhikkhus, there being self, would there be self's property?" -- "Yes, Lord." -- "And there being self's property, would there be self?" -- "Yes, Lord." -- "Bhikkhus, self and self's property being unapprehendable as true and established, then would not this view -- 'This is the world, this the self; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, I shall endure as long as eternity' -- be the pure perfection of a fool's idea?" -- "How could it not be, Lord? It would be the pure perfection of a fool's idea."

MN 22

"Whenever any monks or brahmans see self in its various forms, they all of them see the five aggregates affected by clinging, or one or another of them. Here an untaught ordinary man who disregards noble ones ... sees form as self, or self as possessed of form, or form as in self, or self as in form (or he does likewise with the other four aggregates). So he has this (rationalized) seeing, and he has also this (fundamental) attitude 'I am'; but as long as there is the attitude 'I am' there is organization of the five faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body. Then there is mind, and there are ideas, and there is the element of ignorance. When an untaught ordinary man is touched by feeling born of the contact of ignorance, it occurs to him 'I am' and 'I am this'

and 'I shall be' and 'I shall not be' and 'I shall be with form' and 'I shall be formless' and 'I shall be percipient' and 'I shall be unpercipient' and 'I shall be neither percipient nor unpercipient'. But in the case of the well-taught noble disciple, while the five sense faculties remain as they are, his ignorance about them is abandoned and true knowledge arisen. With that it no more occurs to him 'I am' or ... 'I shall be neither percipient not unpercipient.'"

SN 22:47

NARRATOR TWO: The ordinary man is unaware of the subtle fundamental attitude, the underlying tendency or conceit "I am." It makes him, in perceiving a percept, automatically and simultaneously conceive in terms of "I," assuming an I-relationship to the percept, either as identical with it or as contained within it, or as separate from it, or as owning it. This attitude, this conceiving, is only given up with the attainment of arahantship, not before. (See e.g. MN 1 and MN 49.)

FIRST VOICE:
"'I am' is derivative, not underivative. Derivative upon what? Derivative upon form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness."

SN 22:83

"When any monk or brahman, with form (and the rest) as the means, which is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change, sees thus 'I am superior' or 'I am equal' or 'I am inferior,' what is that if not blindness to what actually is?"

SN 22:49

(Questioned by elders, the Elder Khemaka said:) "I do not see in these five aggregates affected by clinging any self or self's property ... yet I am not an arahant with taints exhausted. On the contrary, I still have

the attitude 'I am' with respect to these five aggregates affected by clinging, although I do not see 'I am this' with respect to them ... I do not say 'I am form' or 'I am feeling' or 'I am perception' or 'I am formations' or 'I am consciousness,' nor do I say 'I am apart from form ... apart from consciousness'; yet I still have the attitude 'I am' with respect to the five aggregates affected by clinging although I do not see 'I am this' with respect to them.

"Although a noble disciple may have abandoned the five more immediate fetters [see below], still his conceit 'I am,' desire 'I am,' underlying tendency 'I am,' with respect to the five aggregates affected by clinging remains as yet unabolished. Later he abides contemplating rise and fall thus: 'Such is form, such is its origin, such its disappearance' (and so with the other four), till by so doing, his conceit 'I am' eventually comes to be abolished."

SN 22:89

NARRATOR TWO: Lastly, we come to the ten fetters, which are progressively broken by the four stages of realization.

FIRST VOICE:
"An untaught ordinary man who disregards noble ones ... lives with his heart possessed and enslaved by the embodiment view, by uncertainty, by misapprehension of virtue and duty,[18] by lust for sensuality, and by ill will, and he does not see how to escape from them when they arise; these, when they are habitual and remain uneradicated in him, are called the more immediate fetters."

MN 64

"The five more remote fetters are: lust for form, lust for the formless, conceit (the conceit 'I am'), distraction, and ignorance."

DN 33

"There are bhikkhus who, with the exhaustion of (the first) three fetters, have entered the stream, are no more subject to perdition, certain of rightness, and destined to enlightenment. There are bhikkhus who, with the exhaustion of three fetters and the attenuation of lust, hate, and delusion, are once-returners: returning once to this world, they will make an end of suffering. There are bhikkhus who, with the destruction of the five more immediate fetters, are destined to reappear spontaneously elsewhere and will there attain final Nibbana, never returning meanwhile from that world. There are bhikkhus who are arahants with taints exhausted, who have lived out the life, done what was to be done, laid down the burden, reached the highest goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and who are completely liberated through final knowledge."

MN 118

"That which is the exhaustion of lust, of hate, and of delusion is called arahantship."

SN 38:2

"When a bhikkhu travels in many countries, learned people of all stations will ask him questions. Learned and inquiring people will ask 'What does the venerable one's teacher tell, what does he preach?' Rightly answering you can say: 'Our teacher preaches the removal of desire and lust.' And if you are then asked 'Removal of desire and lust for what?' you can answer: 'Removal of desire and lust for form (and the rest).' And if you are then asked 'But what inadequacy (danger) do you see in those things?' you can answer: 'When a person is not without lust and desire and love and thirst and fever and craving for these things, then with their change and alteration, sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief, and despair arise in him.' And if you are then asked 'And what advantage do you see in doing thus?' you can answer: 'When a person is free from lust and desire and love and thirst and fever and craving for form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness, then, with their change and alteration, no sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief, and despair arise in him."

Next >>>

Back to Contents | *Back to* Previous Page | *Go to* Right Intention

Home Page | Site Contents | Introduction to Buddhism Page

Footnotes:

12. The details of the first three truths have so far given only analytical details. Here we also have descriptions of how they should be viewed. [Back to text]

13. That means that there is no moral significance in these acts. [Back to text]

14. A plantain or banana trunk consists of nothing but sheaths with no core. [Back to text]

15. "Formed" is *sankhata*, also rendered "compounded" or "conditioned"; "unformed" is *asankhata*, also rendered "uncompounded" or "unconditioned." The latter is identified as Nibbana. [Back to text]

16. *Citta*: mind, mentality, cognizance. [Back to text]

17. "Embodiment": *sakkaya* = *sa* (either "existing" or "own") plus *kaya* (body). The identification of self (*atta*) with one or more of the five aggregates thus constitutes an "embodiment" of that self, and that establishes a wrong view. *Sakkayaditthi* is more usually rendered "personality view." [Back to text]

18. Or "attachment to rites and rituals" (*silabbata-paramasa*). [Back to text]

The Buddha's Teaching

2. Right Intention

NARRATOR TWO: The survey of right view is now concluded. The next factor of the Noble Eightfold Path is right intention.

FIRST VOICE:
"What is right intention? It is the intention of renunciation, the intention of non-ill will, the intention of non-cruelty: this is called right intention."

SN 45:8; DN 22

"When a noble disciple has clearly seen with right understanding, as it actually is, how little gratification sensual desires provide and how much pain and despair they entail, and how great is their inadequacy, and he attains to happiness and pleasure dissociated from sensual desires and unwholesome states, or to something higher than that, then he is no more interested in sensual desires."

MN 14

"Even if bandits brutally severed him limb from limb with a two-handled saw, he who entertained hate in his heart on that account would not be one who followed my teaching."

MN 21

"He does not choose for his own affliction, or for others' affliction, or for the affliction of both."

MN 13

3. Right Speech

NARRATOR TWO: These two factors of right view and right intention together constitute (the group of path factors) "understanding" (*paññа*). Now the third factor, right speech.

FIRST VOICE:
"What is right speech? Abstention from lying, slander, abuse, and gossip; this is called right speech."

SN 45:8; DN 22

"Here someone abandons lying: when summoned to a court or to a meeting or to his relatives' presence or to his guild or to the royal family's presence and questioned as a witness thus 'So, good man, tell what you know,' then, not knowing, he says 'I do not know,' knowing, he says 'I know,' not seeing, he says 'I do not see,' seeing, he says 'I see'; he does not in full awareness speak falsehood for his own ends or for another's ends or for some petty worldly end.

"He abandons slander: as one who is neither a repeater elsewhere of what is heard here for the purpose of causing division from these, nor a repeater to these of what is heard elsewhere for the purpose of causing division from those, who is thus a reuniter of the divided, a promoter of friendships, enjoying concord, rejoicing in concord, delighting in concord, he becomes a speaker of words that promote concord.

"He abandons abuse: he becomes a speaker of such words as are

innocent, pleasing to the ear and lovable, as go to the heart, are civil, desired of many and dear to many.

"He abandons gossip: as one who tells that which is reasonable, factual, good, and the Dhamma and Discipline, he speaks in season speech worth recording, which is reasoned, definite, and connected with good."

MN 41

4. Right Action

NARRATOR TWO: And the fourth factor, right action.

FIRST VOICE:
"What is right action? Abstention from killing living beings, stealing, misconduct in sensual desires: this is called right action."

SN 45:8; DN 22

"When a lay follower possesses five things, he lives with confidence in his house, and he will find himself in heaven as sure as if he had been carried off and put there. What are the five? He abstains from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sensual desires, from speaking falsehood, and from indulging in liquor, wine, and fermented brews."

AN 5:172-73

5. Right Livelihood

NARRATOR TWO: And the fifth factor, right livelihood.

FIRST VOICE:
"What is right livelihood? Here a noble disciple abandons wrong livelihood and gets his living by right livelihood."

SN 45:8; DN 22

"Scheming (to deceive), persuading, hinting, belittling, and pursuing gain with gain; this is called wrong livelihood (for bhikkhus)."

MN 117

"There are five trades that a lay follower should not ply. What five? They are: trading in weapons, living beings, meat, liquor, and poisons."

AN 5:177

6. Right Effort

NARRATOR TWO: These last three factors, right speech, action, and livelihood, constitute (the group of path factors) "virtue" (*sila*). They are known as the preliminary stage of the path. Now comes the sixth factor, right effort.

FIRST VOICE:

"What is right effort? Here a bhikkhu awakens desire for the non-arising of unarisen evil unwholesome states, for which he makes efforts, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and endeavours. He awakens desire for the abandoning of arisen evil unwholesome states, for which he makes efforts ... He awakens desire for the arising of unarisen wholesome states, for which he makes efforts ... He awakens desire for the continuance, non-corruption, strengthening, maintenance in being, and perfecting, of arisen wholesome states, for which he makes efforts, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and endeavours: this is called right effort."

SN 45:8; DN 22

Next >>>

Back to Contents | *Back to* Previous Page | *Go to* Right Mindfulness

Home Page | Site Contents | Introduction to Buddhism Page

The Buddha's Teaching

7. Right Mindfulness

NARRATOR TWO: Now comes the seventh factor, right mindfulness.

FIRST VOICE:
"What is right mindfulness? Here a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent ... He abides contemplating consciousness as consciousness, ardent ... He abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects, ardent, fully aware and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. This is called right mindfulness."

SN 45:8; DN:22

"How does a bhikkhu abide contemplating the body as a body? Here a bhikkhu, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to a room that is void, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and established mindfulness in front of him, just mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out.[19] As a skilled turner or his apprentice, when making a long turn, understands 'I make a long turn,' or when making a short turn, understands 'I make a short turn,' so, breathing in long, the bhikkhu understands 'I breathe in long,' or breathing out long, he understands 'I breathe out long'; breathing in short, he understands 'I breathe in short,' or breathing out short, he understands 'I breathe out short.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body (of breaths)'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body (of breaths).' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in tranquillizing the bodily formation (function)'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquillizing the bodily formation (function).'[20]

"He abides contemplating the body as a body in this way either in himself, or externally, or in himself and externally.[21]

"Or else he contemplates in the body either its factors of origination, or its factors of fall, or its factors of origination and fall.

"Or else mindfulness that 'There is a body' is established in him to the extent of bare knowledge and remembrance of it while he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

"That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

"Again, when walking, a bhikkhu understands 'I am walking'; or when standing, he understands 'I am standing'; or when sitting, he understands 'I am sitting'; or when lying down, he understands 'I am lying down.' Or whatever position his body is in, he understands it to be so disposed.

"He abides contemplating the body as a body ... externally.

"Or else he contemplates ... the factors of origination and fall.

"Or else mindfulness ... not clinging to anything in the world.

"That also is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

"Again, a bhikkhu is fully aware in moving to and fro, in looking ahead and away, in flexing and extending the limbs, in wearing the outer cloak of patches, the bowl and other robes, in eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting, in evacuating the bowels and making water, and he is fully aware and mindful in walking, standing, sitting, going to sleep, waking, talking, and keeping silent.

"He abides contemplating ...

"That also is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

"Again, as though there were a bag with two openings full of many sorts of grain, such as hill rice, red rice, beans, peas, millet, and white rice, and a man with good sight had opened it and were reviewing it: 'This is hill rice, this is red rice, this is beans, this is peas, this is millet, this is white rice'; so too a bhikkhu reviews this body up from the

soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair as full of many kinds of filth: 'There are in this body head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin; flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys; heart, liver, midriff, spleen, lights; bowels, entrails, gorge, dung; bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat; tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil-of-the-joints, and urine.'

"He abides contemplating ...

"That also is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

"Again, as though a skilled butcher or his apprentice had slaughtered a cow and were seated at the four crossroads with it cut up into pieces; so too, in whatever position a bhikkhu finds this body, he reviews it according to the elements: 'There are in this body earth element, water element, fire element, and air element.'

"He abides contemplating ...

"That also is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

"Again, a bhikkhu judges this same body as though he were looking at a corpse thrown on a charnel ground, one-day dead, two-days dead, three-days dead, bloated, livid, and oozing with matter: 'This body too is of such a nature, will be like that, is not exempt from that.'

"He abides contemplating ...

"That also is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

"Again, a bhikkhu judges this same body as though he were looking at a corpse thrown on a charnel ground, being devoured by crows, kites, vultures, dogs, jackals, and the multitudinous varieties of worms: ... as though he were looking at a corpse thrown on a charnel ground, a skeleton with flesh and blood, and held together by sinews: ... a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood and held together by sinews: ... a skeleton without flesh or blood, held together by sinews: ... bones without sinews, scattered in all directions, here a hand-bone, there a foot-bone, there a shin-bone, there a thigh-bone, there a hip-bone, there a back-bone, there a skull: ... bones bleached white, the colour of shells: ... bones heaped up, more than a year old: ... bones rotted and crumbled to dust: 'This body too is of such a nature, will be like that, is not exempt from that.'

"He abides contemplating ...

"That also is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

"And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating feelings as feelings?

"Here, when feeling a pleasant feeling, a bhikkhu understands 'I feel a pleasant feeling'; when feeling a painful feeling, he understands 'I feel a painful feeling'; when feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands 'I feel a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.' When feeling a materialistic pleasant feeling,[22] he understands 'I feel a materialistic pleasant feeling'; ... (and so with the other two). When feeling an unmaterialistic pleasant feeling, he understands 'I feel an unmaterialistic pleasant feeling'; ... (and so with the other two).

"He abides contemplating feelings as feelings in this way either in himself, or externally, or in himself and externally.

"Or else he contemplates in feelings either their factors of origination, or their factors of fall, or their factors of origination and fall.

"Or else mindfulness that 'There are feelings' is established in him to the extent of bare knowledge and remembrance of it while he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

"That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings.

"And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating consciousness as consciousness?

"Here a bhikkhu understands consciousness affected by lust as affected by lust, and that unaffected by lust as unaffected by lust. He understands consciousness affected by hate as affected by hate, and that unaffected by hate as unaffected by hate. He understands consciousness affected by delusion as affected by delusion, and that unaffected by delusion as unaffected by delusion. He understands contracted consciousness as contracted, and distracted consciousness as distracted. He understands exalted consciousness as exalted, and that unexalted as unexalted. He understands surpassed consciousness as surpassed, and that unsurpassed as unsurpassed.[23] He understands concentrated consciousness as concentrated, and that

unconcentrated as unconcentrated. He understands liberated consciousness as liberated, and that unliberated as unliberated.

"He abides contemplating consciousness as consciousness in this way either in himself, or externally, or in himself and externally.

"Or else he contemplates in consciousness its factors of origination, or its factors of fall, or its factors of origination and fall.

"Or else mindfulness that 'There is consciousness' is established in him to the extent of bare knowledge and remembrance of it while he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

"That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating consciousness as consciousness.

"And how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mental objects as mental objects?

"Here, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects in terms of the five hindrances.[24] How is that done? Here, when there is desire for sensuality in him he understands 'There is desire for sensuality in me'; or when there is no desire for sensuality in him, he understands 'There is no desire for sensuality in me'; and also he understands how there comes to be the arising of unarisen desire for sensuality, and how there comes to be the abandoning of arisen desire for sensuality, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of abandoned desire for sensuality. When there is ill will in him ... When there is lethargy and drowsiness in him ... When there is agitation and worry in him ... When there is uncertainty in him ... he understands how there comes to be the future non-arising of abandoned uncertainty.

"He abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects in himself, or externally, or in himself and externally.

"Or else he contemplates in mental objects either their factors of origination, or their factors of fall, or their factors of origination and fall.

"Or else mindfulness that 'There are mental objects' is established in him to the extent of bare knowledge and remembrance of it while he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

"That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects in terms of the five hindrances.

"Again, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects in terms of the five aggregates affected by clinging. How is that done? Here a bhikkhu understands: 'Such is form, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is feeling, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is perception, such its origin, such its disappearance; such are formations, such their origin, such their disappearance; such is consciousness, such its origin, such its disappearance.'

"He abides contemplating ...

"That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects in terms of the five aggregates affected by clinging.

"Again, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects in terms of the six bases in oneself and external. How is that done? Here a bhikkhu understands the eye and visible forms and the fetter that arises owing to both; he understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen fetter, and how there comes to be the abandoning of the arisen fetter, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of the abandoned fetter. He understands the ear and sounds ... the nose and odours ... the tongue and flavours ... the body and tangibles ... the mind and mental objects and the fetter that arises owing to both; ... and he understands how there comes to be the future non-arising of the abandoned fetter.

"He abides contemplating ...

"That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects in terms of the six bases in oneself and external.

"Again, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects in terms of the seven enlightenment factors. How is that done? Here, when there is the mindfulness enlightenment factor in him, a bhikkhu understands 'There is the mindfulness enlightenment factor in me'; when there is no mindfulness enlightenment factor in him, he understands 'There is no mindfulness enlightenment factor in me'; and he understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen mindfulness enlightenment factor and how there comes to be the

development and perfection of the arisen mindfulness enlightenment factor. When there is the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor in him ... the energy enlightenment factor in him ... the happiness enlightenment factor in him ... the tranquillity enlightenment factor in him ... the concentration enlightenment factor in him ... the equanimity enlightenment factor in him ... and he understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen equanimity enlightenment factor and how there comes to be the development and perfection of the arisen equanimity enlightenment factor.

"He abides contemplating ...

"That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects in terms of the seven enlightenment factors.

"Again, a bhikkhu abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects in terms of the Four Noble Truths. How is that done? Here a bhikkhu understands according as it actually is: 'This is suffering' and 'This is the origin of suffering' and 'This is the cessation of suffering' and 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.'

"He abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects in himself, or externally, or in himself and externally.

"Or else he contemplates in mental objects either their factors of origination, or their factors of fall, or their factors of origination and fall.

"Or else mindfulness that 'There are mental objects' is established in him to the extent of bare knowledge and remembrance of it while he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.

"That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mental objects as mental objects in terms of the Four Noble Truths.

"Bhikkhus, were anyone to maintain in being these four foundations of mindfulness for seven years ... let alone for seven years ... for seven days, then one of two fruits could be expected of him: either final knowledge here and now, or else non-return."

DN 22; MN 10

"Bhikkhus, I shall expound to you the origin and disappearance of the four foundations of mindfulness: the body has nutriment for its origin, and it disappears with cessation of nutriment; feelings have contact for their origin, and they disappear with cessation of contact; consciousness has name-and-form for its origin, and it disappears with cessation of name-and-form; mental objects have attention for their origin, and they disappear with cessation of attention."

SN 47:42

"All things have desire for their root, attention provides their being, contact their origin, feeling their meeting-place, concentration confrontation with them, mindfulness control of them, understanding is the highest of them, and deliverance is their core."

AN 8:83

"Would one guard oneself, then the foundations of mindfulness should be cultivated; would one guard others, then the foundations of mindfulness should be cultivated. Who guards himself guards others; who guards others guards himself."

SN 47:19

Next >>>

Back to Contents | *Back to* Previous Page | *Go to* Right Concentration

Home Page | Site Contents | Introduction to Buddhism Page

Footnotes:

19. The exercise described is one in mental observation, not in bodily development or breath-control as in hatha yoga. This sutta, the Satipatthana Sutta, is much recited today as a basis for meditating. Its subject, the establishment of mindfulness, forms the corner-stone of the Buddha's instruction. [Back to text]

20. According to the Commentary, "externally" means someone else's body, etc. (but it could also refer to pure objectivity seen in one's own body too); this first paragraph of the refrain emphasizes concentration. The second paragraph, on origination and fall (decay), refers to insight (right view). The third paragraph describes the full awareness in one who has attained final realization. [Back to text]

21. According to the Commentary, "experiencing the whole body (of breaths)" means being fully aware of the entire in-breath and out-breath. "Tranquillizing the bodily formation" means making the breath become increasingly subtler and calmer. [Back to text]

22. "Materialistic" (*amisa*) refers to such physical things as food, clothing, etc.; here the feeling connected with them. [Back to text]

23. "Contracted" by lethargy; "exalted" from the sensual state to a state of meditation; "surpassed" in meditation or in realization. [Back to text]

24. "Hindrance" should be taken rather in the sense of, as it were, a hedge that keeps one in the traffic-stream of lust, hate, and delusion, rather than an obstacle that blocks the way. [Back to text]

8. Right Concentration

NARRATOR TWO: Now we come to the eighth and last factor, right concentration.

FIRST VOICE:
"What is right concentration?

"Here, quite secluded from sensual desires, secluded from unwholesome states, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first meditation, which is accompanied by thinking and exploring, with happiness and pleasure born of seclusion."

DN 2; DN 22; MN 39; SN 45:8

"Just as a skilled bath man or his apprentice heaps bath-powder in a metal basin, and spinkling it gradually with water, kneads it up till the moisture wets his ball of bath powder, soaks it, and extends over it within and without though the ball itself does not become liquid; so too, the bhikkhu makes happiness and pleasure born of seclusion drench, steep, fill, and extend throughout this body, so that there is nothing of his whole body to which it does not extend."

DN 2; MN 39

"With the stilling of thinking and exploring he enters upon and abides in the second meditation, which has self-confidence and singleness of mind without thinking and exploring, with happiness and pleasure born of concentration."

DN 2; DN 22; MN 39; SN 45:8

"Just as if there were a lake whose waters welled up from below, having no inflow from the east, west, north, or south, nor yet replenished from time to time with showers from the skies, then the cool fount of water welling up from the lake would make the cool water drench, steep, fill, and extend throughout the lake, and there would be nothing of the whole lake to which the cool water did not extend; so too, the bhikkhu makes happiness and pleasure born of concentration drench, steep, fill, and extend throughout this body, so that there is nothing of his whole body to which they do not extend."

DN 2; MN 39

"With the fading away as well of happiness he abides in equanimity, and, mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, he enters upon and abides in the third meditation, on account of which the noble ones announce: 'He has a pleasant abiding who is an onlooker with equanimity and is mindful.'"

DN 2; DN 22; MN 39; SN 45:8

"Just as, in a pond of blue or white or red lotuses, some lotuses are born under the water, grow under the water, do not stand up out of the water, flourish immersed in the water, and the water drenches, steeps, fills, and extends throughout them to their tips and to the their roots, and there is nothing of the whole of those lotuses to which it does not extend; so too, the bhikkhu makes the pleasure divested of happiness drench, steep, fill, and extend throughout this body, so that there is nothing of his whole body to which it does not extend."

DN 2; MN 39

"With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous

disappearance of joy and grief, he enters upon and abides in the fourth meditation, which has neither pain nor pleasure, and the purity of whose mindfulness is due to equanimity."

DN 2; DN 22; MN 39; SN 45:8

"Just as if a man were sitting clothed from head to foot in white cloth, and there were nothing of his whole body to which the white cloth did not extend; so too the bhikkhu sits with pure bright cognizance extending over his body and there is nothing of his whole body to which it does not extend."

DN 2; MN 39

"What is the noble ones' right concentration with its causes and its equipment? It is any unifiedness of mind that is equipped with the other seven factors of the path. Right view comes first: one understands wrong view, intention, speech, action, and livelihood, as wrong; one understands right view, intention, speech, action, and livelihood, as right, each of two kinds, that is, either associated with taints and ripening in the essentials of existence, or supramundane and a factor of the path. One makes efforts to abandon wrong view and the other four, and to acquire right view and the other four: this is one's right effort. Mindfully one abandons the wrong and enters upon the way of the right: this is one's right mindfulness."

MN 117 (condensed)

NARRATOR TWO: These last three factors, right effort, mindfulness, and concentration, together constitute "concentration." The eight, with right knowledge and right deliverance, are called the "ten rightnesses," which constitute the "certainty of rightness" attained with the path of stream-entry. Before leaving the subject of concentration, though, there are four more stages attainable called the four "formless states." They are extra to "right concentration," merely refinements of the fourth meditation.

FIRST VOICE:
"With the complete surmounting of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, by not giving attention to perceptions of difference, (aware of) 'infinite space,' a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the base consisting of infinity of space.

"Again, by completely surmounting the base consisting of infinity of space, (aware of) 'infinite consciousness,' he enters upon and abides in the base consisting of infinity of consciousness.

"Again, by completely surmounting the base consisting of infinity of consciousness, (aware that) 'there is nothing at all,' he enters upon and abides in the base consisting of nothingness.

"Again, by completely surmounting the base consisting of nothingness, he enters upon and abides in the base consisting of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

"The four meditations are not called effacement in the Noble One's Discipline; they are called in the Noble One's Discipline, a pleasant abiding here and now. The four formless states are not called effacement in the Noble One's Discipline; they are called in the Noble One's Discipline, quiet abidings."

MN 8

"This bhikkhu (who practises these eight attainments) is said to have blindfolded Mara, to have (temporarily) deprived Mara's eyesight of its object and become invisible to the Evil One."

MN 25

NARRATOR TWO: None of these eight attainments is claimed as peculiar to the Buddhas' teaching. The practice of them without right view leads only to heaven, but not to Nibbana. The teaching peculiar to Buddhas is the Four Noble Truths. A ninth attainment, the "attainment of cessation," is described as reached only in the two highest stages of realization and

is thus peculiar to Buddhas and their disciples.

FIRST VOICE:
"By completely surmounting the base consisting of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the cessation of perception and feeling, and his taints are exhausted by his seeing with understanding. Then a bhikkhu is said to have blindfolded Mara, to have deprived Mara's eyesight of its object and become invisible to the Evil One, and, what is more, to have gone beyond all attachment to the world."

MN 25

"When a wise man, established well in virtue,
Develops consciousness and understanding,
Then as a bhikkhu, ardent and sagacious,
He succeeds in disentangling this tangle."

SN 1:23

"Bhikkhus, if one man were to travel and trudge through one age, then the heap, the pile, the mass of his bones would be as high as this Vepulla Hill, if they were collected and the store were not destroyed."

Iti 24

"Suppose a man threw into the ocean a yoke with one hole in it, and then the east wind blew it west and the west wind blew it east and the north wind blew it south and the south wind blew it north; and suppose there were a blind turtle that came up to the surface once at the end of each century. How do you conceive this, bhikkhus, would that blind turtle eventually put his head through that yoke with the one hole in it?"

"He might, Lord, at the end of a long period."

"Bhikkhus, the blind turtle would sooner put his head through that yoke with a single hole in it than a fool, once gone to perdition, would find his way back to the human state."

MN 129

"Bhikkhus, the Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus is frank, open, evident, and stripped of padding. In this Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus, any who have simply faith in me, simply love for me, are destined for heaven."

MN 22

"What should be done for the disciples out of compassion by a teacher who seeks their welfare and is compassionate, that I have done for you. There are these roots of trees, these rooms that are void: meditate, bhikkhus, do not delay lest you regret it later. This is our instruction to you."

MN 8; MN 152

NARRATOR TWO: That concludes the survey. But how is the Way actually followed?

Next >>>

Back to Contents | *Back to* Previous Page | *Go to* The Noble Path in Practice

Home Page | Site Contents | Introduction to Buddhism Page

The Buddha's Teaching

The Noble Eightfold Path in Practice

FIRST VOICE:
One morning the Venerable Ananda dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, he went into Savatthi for alms. He saw Janussoni the brahman driving out of Savatthi in a chariot drawn by four mares, all in white: white steeds, white harnesses, white chariot, white upholstery, white sandals; and he was even being fanned with a white fan. When people saw this, they said: "What a divine vehicle! Now that is like a divine vehicle!"

On his return, the Venerable Ananda told the Blessed One about it, and he asked: "Lord, can a divine vehicle be pointed to in this Dhamma and Discipline?"

"It can, Ananda," the Blessed One said. "'Divine vehicle' is a name for the Noble Eightfold Path; and so is 'vehicle of Dhamma,' and so is 'peerless victory in battle'; for all the components of the Noble Eightfold Path culminate in the expulsion of lust, hate, and delusion."

SN 45:4

"(Once a child is conceived and with birth and the growth of youth) his sense faculties mature, then he becomes furnished and invested with the five strands of sensual desires and exploits them: forms cognizable through the eye that are wished for, desired, agreeable, and likable, connected with sensual desire and provocative of lust; likewise sounds cognizable through the ear, odours cognizable through the nose, flavours cognizable through the tongue, and

tangibles cognizable through the body.

"On seeing a visible form with the eye, hearing a sound with the ear, smelling an odour with the nose, tasting a flavour with the tongue, touching a tangible with the body, cognizing an idea with the mind, he lusts after it if it is likable, or has ill will towards it if it is dislikable. He abides without mindfulness of the body established and with mind limited while he does not understand as they actually are the deliverance of mind and deliverance by understanding wherein those evil unwholesome states cease without remainder. Engaged as he is in favouring and opposing, when he feels any feeling, whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, he relishes that feeling, affirms and accepts it. Relishing arises in him when he does that. Now any relishing of those feelings is clinging. With his clinging as condition, being; with being as condition, birth; with birth as condition, ageing and death come to be, and also sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. That is how there is an origin to this whole aggregate mass of suffering.

"Here a Perfect One appears in the world, accomplished and fully enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, knower of worlds, incomparable leader of men to be tamed, teacher of gods and men, enlightened, blessed. He declares this world with its deities, its Maras and its Brahmas, this generation with its monks and brahmans, with its princes and men, which he has himself realized by direct knowledge. He teaches a Dhamma good in the beginning, the middle, and the end, with the meaning and the letter, and he announces a holy life that is utterly perfect and pure.

"Some householder, or his son, or one born in some clan, hears that Dhamma. On hearing it, he has faith in the Perfect One. Possessed of that faith, he considers: 'Household life is crowded and dirty, life gone forth is wide open. It is not easy, living in a household, to lead a holy life as utterly perfect and pure as a polished shell. Suppose I shaved off hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and went forth from the home life into homelessness?'

"And on another occasion, abandoning perhaps a small, perhaps a large fortune, abandoning perhaps a small, perhaps a large circle of relatives, he shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the yellow robe, and goes forth from the home life into homelessness.

"Being thus gone forth and possessing the bhikkhus' training and way

of life, he abandons killing living beings, abstaining therefrom with rod and weapon laid aside; gentle and kindly, he abides compassionate to all beings. He abandons taking what is not given, abstaining therefrom by taking only what is given; expecting only what is given, he abides pure in himself by not stealing. He abandons incelibacy; he lives the celibate life as one who lives apart, abstaining from vulgar lechery. He abandons false speech, abstaining therefrom by speaking truth; cleaving to truth when he speaks, he is trustworthy, reliable and undeceiving of the world. He abandons slander ... He abandons abuse ... He abandons gossip ... he speaks in season speech worth recording, which is reasoned, definite, and connected with good.[25]

"He abstains from injuring seeds and plants. He eats only in one part of the day, refraining from food at night and late meals. He abstains from dancing, singing, music, and theatrical shows; from wearing garlands, smartening with scents, and embellishing with unguents; from high and large couches; from accepting gold and silver, corn, raw meat, women and girls, bondswomen and bondsmen, sheep and goats, poultry and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, fields and lands; from going on errands; from buying and selling; from false weights, false metals, and false measures; from cheating, deceiving, defrauding, and trickery; from mutilating, executing, imprisoning, robbery, plunder, and violence.

"He is content with robes to protect the body, with almsfood to sustain the belly, so that wherever he goes he takes everything with him, just as whenever a winged bird flies it flies using its own wings. Possessing this store of the noble ones' virtue, he feels in himself a bliss that is blameless.

"He becomes one who, on seeing a form with the eye, apprehends no signs and features through which, if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him; he practises the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, gives effect to restraint of the eye faculty. (Likewise, on hearing a sound with the ear, smelling an odour with the nose, tasting a flavour with the tongue, touching a tangible with the body, and cognizing an idea with the mind.) Possessing this noble ones' faculty restraint, he feels in himself an unsullied bliss.

"He comes to be fully aware when moving to and fro ... and keeping silent.[26]

"Possessing this store of the noble ones' virtue, and this noble ones' faculty restraint, and this noble ones' mindfulness and full awareness, he resorts to a secluded resting place -- to the forest, a tree root, a rock, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw. On returning from his alms round after the meal, he sits down, folding his legs crosswise, setting his body erect, and establishing mindfulness in front of him.

"Abandoning covetousness for the world, he abides with a mind devoid of covetousness; he purifies his mind from covetousness. Abandoning ill will and hatred, he abides with no thought of ill will, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings; he purifies his mind from ill will and hatred. Abandoning lethargy and drowsiness, he abides with a mind free of lethargy and drowsiness, percipient of light, mindful and fully aware; he purifies his mind from lethargy and drowsiness. Abandoning agitation and worry, he abides unagitated with mind stilled in himself; he purifies his mind of agitation and worry. Abandoning uncertainty, he abides with a mind that has outgrown uncertainty, questioning no more about unwholesome states; he purifies his mind of uncertainty."

MN 38

"Suppose a man borrowed a loan and undertook works and the works succeeded so that he repaid all the money of the old loan and there remained over some extra for his wife and children; then on considering that, he was glad and joyful; or suppose a man was afflicted, suffering and gravely ill and his food did not sustain him and his body had no strength, but later he recovered from the affliction and his body regained strength; or suppose a man were imprisoned in a prison-house, but later he was released from imprisonment safe and sound with no loss to his property; or suppose a man were a bondsman, not self-dependent but dependent on others and unable to go where he wanted, but later he was freed from that bondage and was self-dependent, independent of others and a freeman able to go where he wanted; or suppose a man with property and goods entered on a road across a desert, but later he crossed over the desert safe and sound with no loss to his property; then on considering that, he was glad and joyful; so too, when these five hindrances are unabandoned in himself, a bhikkhu sees them respectively as a debt, a disease, a prison-house, a bondage, and a road across a desert; and when they

are abandoned in himself, he sees them as unindebtedness, health, release from prison, freedom from bondage, and a land of safety."

MN 39

"Having abandoned the five hindrances, mental imperfections that weaken understanding, then quite secluded from sensual desires, secluded from unwholesome states, he enters upon and abides in the first meditation ... the second meditation ... the third meditation ... the fourth meditation.

"On seeing a form with the eye, hearing a sound with the ear, smelling an odour with the nose, tasting a flavour with the tongue, touching a tangible with the body, cognizing an idea with the mind, he does not lust after it if it is likable; and he has no ill will towards it if it is dislikable. He abides with mindfulness of the body established and a measureless state of mind while he understands as they actually are the deliverance of mind and deliverance by understanding wherein those evil unwholesome states cease without remainder. Having thus abandoned favouring and opposing, when he feels any feeling, whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, he does not relish that feeling or affirm or accept it.

"When he does not do that, his relishing of those feelings ceases. With cessation of his relishing, cessation of clinging; with cessation of clinging, cessation of being; with cessation of being, cessation of birth; with cessation of birth, aging and death cease, and also sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief, and despair; that is how there is a cessation to this whole aggregate mass of suffering."

MN 38

The Means

FIRST VOICE:
"Suppose a man wanting a snake saw a large snake, and when he wrongly grasped it by its coils or its tail, it turned back and bit him, on which account he came to death or deadly suffering -- why? because of his wrong grasp of the snake; so too, some misguided men learn the Dhamma without examining the meaning of the teachings with understanding, so they acquire no liking for meditating upon them. Learning it instead for the sake of carping and rebuttal of criticism, they fail to appreciate the purpose for which the Dhamma is learnt, and they find that the teachings being wrongly grasped by them, for long conduce to their harm and suffering.

"But suppose a man who wanted a snake saw a large one, and when he caught it in a forked stick and rightly grasped it by the neck, then for all it might wrap its coils about his hand or arm or limbs, still he would not on that account come to death or deadly suffering; so too some clansmen learn the Dhamma and examine the meaning of the teachings with understanding, so that they acquire a liking for meditating upon them. Not learning it for the sake of carping and rebuttal of criticism, they appreciate the purpose for which the Dhamma is learnt, and they find that those teachings being rightly grasped by them, for long conduce to their welfare and happiness.

"Bhikkhus, suppose a traveller saw a great expanse of water, whose near shore was dangerous and fearful and whose further shore was safe and free from fear, but there was no ferry or bridge. Then after considering this, he collected grass and branches and twigs and leaves and bound them together into a raft, supported by which, and making efforts with his hands and feet, he got safely across. Then, when he had got across, he thought: 'This raft has been very helpful to me since by its means I got safely across; suppose I hoist it on my head or load it on my shoulder and go where I mean to go?' Now would he be doing what should be done with a raft?" -- "No, Lord." -- "What should he do with it? If, when he got across, he thought: 'This raft has been very helpful to me since by its means I got safely across; suppose I haul it up on dry land or set it adrift on the water and go where I mean to go?', then that is how he is doing what should be done with the raft. So I have shown you how the Dhamma resembles a raft in being for the purpose of crossing over, not for grasping. Bhikkhus, when you know the Simile of the Raft (then even good) teachings should be abandoned by you, how much more so bad teachings."

MN 22 (condensed)

The End

FIRST VOICE:
"Cessation of lust, of hate, and of delusion is the Unformed (Unconditioned), the End, the Taintless, the Truth, the Other Shore, the Subtle, the Very Hard To See, the Unweakening, the Everlasting, the Undisintegrating, the Invisible, the Undiversified, Peace, the Deathless, the Superior Goal, the Blest, Safety, Exhaustion of Craving, the Wonderful, the Marvellous, Non-distress, the Naturally Non-distressed, Nibbana, Non-affliction (Unhostility), Fading of Lust, Purity, Freedom, Independence of Reliance, the Island, the Shelter, the Harbour, the Refuge, the Beyond."

SN 43:1-44

Back to Contents | *Back to* Previous Page

Home Page | Site Contents | Introduction to Buddhism Page

Footnotes:

25. See "right speech" (here) for full text. [Back to text]

26. See "right mindfulness" (here) for full text. [Back to text]